

Regionwide, Multiple Units & Other Regions

Note: The Board of Game deferred this proposal from the 2017 Interior/Northeast Arctic Region Meeting. It was previously numbered Proposal 93.

PROPOSAL 70 – 5 AAC 92.530(7)(C)(i)(2). Management Areas. Remove the Bettles Winter Trail travel exception for public use within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area as follows:

The following management areas are subject to special restrictions:

(7) the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area:

(C) no motorized vehicle may be used to transport hunters, hunting gear, or parts of game, within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area, except that

(i) licensed highway vehicles may be used on the following designated roads:

(1) Dalton Highway,

[(2) BETTLES WINTER TRAIL DURING PERIODS WHEN THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND THE CITY OF BETTLES ANNOUNCE THAT THE TRAIL IS OPEN FOR WINTER TRAVEL,]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Department of Fish and Game is submitting this proposal as a placeholder to provide the Board of Game with an opportunity to make changes to the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area (DHCMA) regulation that may become necessary based on possible actions taken by land managers in the affected area. This proposal would remove the Bettles Winter Trail as a motorized travel exception from the DHCMA regulation. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently conducting an environmental analysis of permitted use of the Bettles Winter Trail. The decision may be forthcoming by June 2016, which is after the deadline for proposals for this Board of Game meeting. BLM is also currently assessing the Bettles Winter Trail in their Central Yukon Management Plan. At this time, it appears that if the Bettles Winter Trail permit is approved by BLM in its current form, vehicle access will be restricted to commercial fuel trucks only with no public use allowed. Therefore, the existing regulation which designates the Bettles Winter Trail as a legal motorized travel exception within the DHCMA would mislead hunters and possibly subject them to citations if the road is closed to public use.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F16-139)

Note: The Board of Game deferred this proposal from the 2016 Statewide Regulations Meeting. It was previously numbered Proposal 14.

PROPOSAL 71 – 5 AAC 92.080. Unlawful methods of taking game; exceptions, and 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions. Allow the use of crossbows in restricted-weapons hunts as follows:

In order to allow more opportunity for those hunters wishing to use a crossbow while hunting during special hunts like the roadside "targeted hunts" for moose in Southcentral and the Interior,

or while hunting in specific game management areas or state refuges around the state where either muzzleloaders or shotguns and bow and arrow are the approved hunting tools, I would ask the Board of Game to include the use of crossbows as a fourth approved hunting tool.

In addition to those wishing to hunt with a crossbow, there are those older or smaller hunters who, for whatever reason, cannot use a bow and arrow that meets the existing requirements. A person who cannot draw and hold a bow and arrow can normally still use a crossbow if that tool was legal for use.

What I am proposing is that the category of crossbow be added to the list of approved hunting tools for those hunts in game management areas, state game refuges, and special hunts where either a muzzleloader or shotgun is legal along with bow and arrow. For areas or hunts that are specified as bow and arrow only, nothing will change.

A crossbow has certain advantages over a bow and arrow and also has some major disadvantages compared to a bow and arrow. However, the two hunting tools are still relatively comparable in power and range. A crossbow does not even come close to a muzzleloader or shotgun in comparison. If a muzzleloader or a shotgun is legal to use, along with bow and arrow, then there are no practical concerns to not allow a crossbow along with bow and arrow in those areas or hunts which also allow a muzzleloader or shotgun.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There are currently several state game management areas, state refuges, and special hunts statewide which support weapons restricted big game hunts. Most of these hunts prohibit the use of centerfire, high-powered rifles and specify that only muzzleloaders, shotguns using slugs, or bow and arrow (or some combination of the specified implements) are allowed. Hunters choosing to use muzzleloaders or bow and arrow must comply with existing regulation requirements for these hunting tools, i.e., things like muzzleloading caliber or the bow's draw weight.

These restrictions in areas or refuges or special hunts are done largely for safety reasons because all of the approved hunting tools are considered short-range compared to a highpowered rifle.

The Board of Game recently defined crossbows in regulation into their own category with requirements on power, bolt length, etc. This was done because crossbows as hunting tools are gradually increasing in hunting use for big game in Alaska during the general season and have become the fastest growing hunting tool in the Lower 48 for hunting animals like white-tailed deer and black bear. It was felt that a distinction between bow and arrow and crossbow was necessary.

Since crossbows are defined separately from bow and arrow, current regulations allowing the use of bow and arrow exclude the use of a crossbow for hunting during that same hunt.

PROPOSED BY: Howard Delo (EG-C15-037)

PROPOSAL 72 – 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Establish archery-only registration hunts for moose in Units 9, 11, 13, 14A, 14B, 16 and 17 as follows:

Establish a registration archery (conventional bows, not crossbows, IBEP certified hunters) only moose season in any Unit of 9, 11, 13, 14A, 14B, 16 or 17 that is open to a general (harvest ticket) moose hunt. A legal moose would be the same as during the general season hunt. Season dates would be seven days immediately following the close of the general moose season.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Nearly all states in the lower 48 encourage bowhunting by having long archery only seasons in desirable times of the year. This allows many individuals the opportunity to hunt with a challenging, ethically satisfying device while limiting the harvest because of the limited range of that device. More hunting opportunity translates into more hunters which results in more license sales and more gear purchased. This all rests in increased Pittman-Robertson federal funds to support better wildlife management. Hunters are the best conservationists and bowhunters are the best of the best because they spend more time in the field and harvest less game. Alaska has very few archery-only hunts but we believe that more hunts could be offered with minimal impact on the game populations. We are asking for a special archery moose hunt, which would occur after the regular firearms moose hunt. It would be a registration hunt. A legal moose would be whatever moose was legal in the general hunt in that same area. In other words, no special size limits for archery hunters. The purpose of the hunt being after the general moose hunt would be because the weather is colder and meat care is easier later in the fall. Also, fewer leaves on the trees and bushes make the moose easier to see. We would propose a registration hunt so that it could be closely monitored in terms of participation and harvest. We purpose this hunt for any area open to moose hunting with a general harvest ticket.

PROPOSED BY: The Alaskan Bowhunters Association (EG-F17-064)

PROPOSAL 73 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Establish archery-only registration hunts for Dall sheep in Units 9, 11, 13, 14A, 14B, 16 and 17 as follows:

Establish an archery only (conventional bows, not crossbows) registration sheep hunt in all areas of Units 9, 11, 13, 14A, 14B, 16 and 17 that are currently general season (harvest ticket) hunts. Season dates to be August 1–9.

An alternative would be the above registration archery sheep hunt from September 21–30. This is not as desirable because of shorter daylight hours and worse weather.

Legal sheep in either case would be full-curl, eight years of age or double-broomed ram only.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Nearly all other states promote bowhunting by allowing longer seasons in more desirable times of the year because bowhunting allows greater public participation in hunting and conservation activities while at the same time limiting by the method of take of the actual harvest of game. Alaska has been struggling with much dissatisfaction among its sheep hunters because of overcrowding and lack

of quality animals being available. Allowing an early archery sheep hunt before the regular firearm season would potentially reduce crowding on August 10 and it would not cause any significant increase in sheep harvest. Biologically as long as a legal sheep was still defined as full-curl, eight years old or double-broomed it would not affect the sheep population. There would be benefit to both resident and nonresident hunters and guides because it would give the guides another potential hunt to sell. Bowhunters are not an exclusive group. Anyone can learn to be proficient with bow and arrow. But the harvest would be much less because of the need to get very much closer to the sheep before being able to make a kill. This would be a method by which the Board of Game could provide increased hunting opportunity while not increasing the take of sheep. It would be only in areas where sheep hunting is currently allowed by harvest ticket and not in the special drawing hunt areas. It seems reasonable to initiate this type of season in only one region so that it can be studied to see its effect on the sheep population and on hunters' enjoyment of their opportunities. We propose making it a registration hunt so that participation and reporting can be closely monitored.

PROPOSED BY: The Alaskan Bowhunters Association (EG-F17-082)

PROPOSAL 74 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Remove the nonresident bag limit restriction of one Dall sheep every four years in the Central/Southwest Region as follows:

My proposal is to change the nonresident restriction “one ram every four regulatory years” to “one ram every regulatory year.” Stated in regulatory language:

5 AAC 85.055 Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS: 1 ram with full-curl horn or larger, [EVERY 4 REGULATORY YEARS]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to address the regulation within 5 AAC 85.055 that currently only allows nonresidents to harvest one Dall sheep every four years. Roughly 80% of all sheep hunters in Alaska on any given year are on their first or second sheep hunt. Roughly 60% of all sheep hunters are on their first sheep hunt. Data from ADF&G shows that most Dall sheep harvested in Alaska every year were taken by novice sheep hunters, regardless of residency.

Few people actually report hunting sheep multiple times over the years. The heated topics and issues surrounding Dall sheep hunting truly is a problem of the few. However, those few are very passionate. Their desires and dreams are filled with the persistent thoughts of returning to the mountains, in pursuit of those majestic animals. This passion is the very reason why those hunters should be allowed the freedom to continue and pursue their dreams.

The only people who are excluded from returning to hunt Dall sheep are those nonresidents who successfully harvested a sheep in Alaska in the prior three years. Residents who have

successfully taken sheep are not excluded from hunting again. Just because a nonresident hunter has had success in the past, he or she should not be excluded from further opportunity.

For those who believe their own chances of taking a Dall sheep will improve by further restrictions of nonresidents, I believe they are misguided. To borrow a quote from Jack O'Connor, "This is no game for the weak-kneed and faint-hearted. Hunter success is not high, not because there aren't enough sheep but because there aren't enough people with the temperament to become sheep hunters." – *The Bighorn, March 1960*. Alaska is the only state in America that does not severely restrict sheep tags to its own residents. Residents of Alaska may go sheep hunting every single year, and it should remain this way. But restricting a few nonresidents does nothing to improve an individual's sheep hunting abilities.

Furthermore, there will be very limited impact of allowing these nonresident hunters to return to the mountains. According to data from ADF&G, for the 16 hunting seasons spanning from 2000–2015, there were 24,164 hunters who reported hunting sheep a total of 42,150 times. If we look at just the total number of nonresidents who attempted another hunt within a four year period after successfully taking a sheep, there was a total of 211. This includes both those guided, and those hunting with second degree Alaskan family. However, how many of these hunters successfully took another sheep within that four-year window? 135, most of which came from repeat guided clients. That comes out to 8.4 sheep per year, statewide! Stated another way, this is about one sheep saved per mountain range where sheep exist in Alaska. This level of "conservation" is laughable at best.

With a population of sheep somewhere around 45,000 statewide, and the literature showing repeated natural population fluctuations, both increasing and decreasing, of 28–35% in one to three year periods over areas of the Alaska Range (Arthur 2003) and Canada (Hoefs and Bayer 1983), the "normal" fluctuation statewide would be expected to be about 12,600–15,700 sheep. Not allowing these few passionate hunters to harvest 8.4 sheep per year on a conservation basis is inconsequential. Therefore, please consider allowing a nonresident hunter the opportunity to continue to hunt Dall sheep each year.

PROPOSED BY: Chris Harper (EG-F17-050)

PROPOSAL 75 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Allow nonresidents to obtain one general season Dall sheep permit in a regulatory year in the Central/Southwest Region as follows:

My proposal is to allow any hunter currently under the "one sheep every four regulatory years" restriction be allowed to obtain one general season permit for Dall sheep in a regulatory year. If issued such a permit, that hunter agrees to the following:

Voluntarily forfeiting all opportunity to hunt other big game species in Alaska that year, including drawing permits, registration permits, and general season hunts.

This would allow a person, whose passion above all else is to pursue Dall sheep, the opportunity to do so while excluding them from all other Alaska big game opportunity. This is a positive for both those few passionate sheep hunters, and for everyone else whose interest is more directed to other species.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to address the regulation that currently only allows nonresidents to harvest one Dall sheep every four years. Roughly 80% of all sheep hunters in Alaska on any given year are on their first or second sheep hunt. Roughly 60% of all sheep hunters are on their first sheep hunt. Data from ADF&G shows that most Dall sheep harvested in Alaska every year were taken by novice sheep hunters, regardless of residency.

Few people actually report hunting sheep multiple times over the years. The heated topics and issues surrounding Dall sheep hunting truly is a problem of the few. However, those few are very passionate. Their desires and dreams are filled with the persistent thoughts of returning to the mountains, in pursuit of those majestic animals. This passion is the very reason why those hunters should be allowed the freedom to continue and pursue their dreams.

The only people who are excluded from returning to hunt Dall sheep are those nonresidents who successfully harvested a sheep in Alaska in the prior three years. Residents who have successfully taken sheep are not excluded from hunting again. Just because a nonresident hunter has had success in the past, he or she should not be excluded from further opportunity.

For those who believe their own chances of taking a Dall sheep will improve by further restrictions of nonresidents, I believe they are misguided. To borrow a quote from Jack O'Connor, "This is no game for the weak-kneed and faint-hearted. Hunter success is not high, not because there aren't enough sheep but because there aren't enough people with the temperament to become sheep hunters." – *The Bighorn, March 1960*. Alaska is the only state in America that does not severely restrict sheep tags to its own residents. Residents of Alaska may go sheep hunting every single year, and it should remain this way. But restricting a few nonresidents does nothing to improve an individual's sheep hunting abilities.

Furthermore, there will be very limited impact of allowing these nonresident hunters to return to the mountains. According to data from ADF&G, for the 16 hunting seasons spanning from 2000–2015, there were 24,164 hunters who reported hunting sheep a total of 42,150 times. If we look at just the total number of nonresidents who attempted another hunt within a four year period after successfully taking a sheep, there was a total of 211. This includes both those guided, and those hunting with second degree Alaskan family. However, how many of these hunters successfully took another sheep within that 4-year window? 135, most of which come from repeat guided clients. That comes out to 8.4 sheep per year, statewide! Stated another way, this is about one sheep saved per mountain range where sheep exist in Alaska. This level of "conservation" is laughable at best.

With a population of sheep somewhere around 45,000 statewide, and the literature showing repeated natural population fluctuations, both increasing and decreasing, of 28–35% in one to three year periods over areas of the Alaska Range (Arthur 2003) and Canada (Hoefs and Bayer

1983), the “normal” fluctuation statewide would be expected to be about 12,600–15,700 sheep. Not allowing these few passionate hunters to harvest 8.4 sheep per year on a conservation basis is inconsequential. Therefore, please consider allowing a nonresident hunter the opportunity to continue to hunt Dall sheep each year if the hunter is willing to sacrifice all other Alaskan big game tags.

PROPOSED BY: Chris Harper (EG-F17-051)

PROPOSAL 76 – 5 AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemption. Reauthorize the brown bear tag fee exemptions for the Central/Southwest Region as follows:

5 AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemption

(a) A resident tag is not required for taking a brown bear in the following units:

- (1) Unit 11;
- (2) Units 13 and 16(A);
- (3) Unit 16(B) and 17;

...

(11) Unit 9, within the following areas, unless a smaller area is defined by the department in an applicable permit:

(A) Unit 9(B), within five miles of the communities of Port Alsworth, Nondalton, Iliamna, Newhalen, Pile Bay, Pedro Bay, Pope Vanoy Landing, Kakhonak, Igiugig, and Levelock;

(B) Unit 9(C), within five miles of the communities of King Salmon, Naknek, and South Naknek;

(C) Unit 9(D), within five miles of the communities of Cold Bay, King Cove, Sand Point, and Nelson Lagoon;

(D) Unit 9(E), within five miles of the communities of Egegik, Pilot Point, Ugashik, Port Heiden, Port Moller, Chignik Lake, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Bay, Perryville, and Ivanof Bay;

(12) Unit 10, within three miles of the community of False Pass, unless a smaller area is defined by the department in an applicable permit.

(b) In addition to the units as specified in (a) of this section, if a hunter obtains a subsistence registration permit before hunting, that hunter is not required to obtain a resident tag to take a brown bear in the following units:

- (1) Unit 9(B);
- (2) Unit 9(E), that portion including all drainages that drain into the Pacific Ocean between Cape Kumliun and the border of Unit 9(D) and Unit 9(E);
- (3) Unit 17;

...

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Brown bear tag fee exemptions must be reauthorized annually or the fee will be automatically reinstated.

General Season Hunts: The Board of Game (board) liberalized brown bear hunting regulations including the tag fee exemption to increase the harvest of brown bears in Units 11, 13, and 16

during the March 2003 board meeting and in Unit 17 during the March 2011 board meeting. The tag fee exemption in these units provides greater opportunity to harvest of brown bears by allowing opportunistic harvest.

The board also exempted brown bear tag fees for bear hunts near communities in Unit 9 to address public safety concerns in communities during the board meeting in March 2011. Brown bears are abundant in Unit 9 and are managed as a trophy species. Brown bears are frequently observed in communities where they destroy property in search of food or garbage and occasionally kill pets. The liberalized bear seasons and bag limits adopted along with the elimination of the tag fee were intended to allow people to take bears before they destroy property, to promote a greater acceptance of the unit's bear population, and to resolve some of the compliance issues associated with the take of bears in defense of life or property.

Subsistence Brown Bear Hunts: The board waived the brown bear tag fee requirement for subsistence brown bear hunts in Unit 17 and portions of Unit 9. Subsistence brown bear harvest rates are low and well within sustainable limits. Exempting the resident tag fee has not caused an increase in subsistence harvest in these units. Continuation of the exemption accommodates cultural and traditional uses of brown bears in these units and provides an alternative for hunters who take brown bears primarily for their meat.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F17-037)
